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ABSTRACT

An international effort is under way to measure and assess the nature of imposed political reforms to education systems. Education is changing in relation to new structures and practices brought about during the process of reform at the school level. This paper investigates policy analysis of national reform in Australia, and in various states of Australia. While the paper highlights inadequacies in the educational policy process in Australia and notes the neo-politicization of educational decision-making, it also provides an argument about the roles teachers, administrators, and educational researchers (and combinations of these) play in helping communities make sense of and contribute to schooling. Sections detail the Australian policy landscape, national policy as intervention, policy development for a national curriculum, national policy and teachers' work, and pragmatic policy development. (68 references) (RR)

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National Reform, Touchstone and Policy Analysis

An Australian Perspective

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National Education Reforms and School Processes: International Perspectives

Organised by Prof. Stephen Ball, University of London
Chaired by Prof. Rod Webb, University of Florida
Discussant: Dr Sandra Acker, OISE, Toronto

Other participants:
Professor Stephen Ball, University of London
Professor Roger Dale, University of Auckland
Professor Rein Van der Vegt, University of Utrecht
Professor Roland Vandenburghe, University of Leuven

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National Reform, Touchstone and Policy Analysis: An Australian Perspective

A Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association San Francisco, 20-24 April, 1992.

Stephen James Crump
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There is an international effort currently under way to measure and assess the nature of imposed political reforms to education systems; "international" as this effort has so far been reported in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America, Britain, Scandinavia, Western and Eastern Europe as well as in the new republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States . Much of this research has concentrated on the impact of the development of a national curriculum. However, there is a growing body of research on the impact on school cultures of management re-organisation and new educational legislation so that the nature of teachers' work is being re-defined.

Brown (1990) argues, for example, that there are trends evident in Australia, New Zealand and the USA which identify a 'third wave' in education, one in which the education a child receives relates more to the wealth and wishes of parents rather than to the abilities and efforts of pupils. Research in other parts of the globe have looked at the restructuring education through economic competition in Chile (Schiefeblein, 1991), the impact of structural reform in China (Tsang, 1991), teachers' views on educational policy in Austria (Vorbek, 1991) and the contribution of local and regional authorities to European education policy (CPL, 26, 8, Part II). There are numerous other changes requiring investigation, for example, the development of educational policy for the year 2000 in Germany (Vorbek, 1991), the ten-year plan for Iceland (Kjartansson, 1991), the Irish New Education Act introduced in 1992, the new Educational Reform Bill for Spain (Parera, 1991), the implementation of the national minimal curriculum for secondary school in Malta, changes to primary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the changing face of education in Lithuania (Barrett, 1991)

More generally, economic pressure on resources, competing political priorities, tension between re-centralised and local forces, and low morale are characteristics of schools found in the policy processes of developed as well as developing countries. As Jones (1992: xiii) argues, national governments behave in similar ways when addressing policy, nothwithstanding their sovereignty:

> *The world's schools, their teachers and their curricula are becoming more and more alike. School systems become organised and managed on increasingly similar lines. The uses of literacy become standardised. Universities strive to be as similar as possible. Textbooks become international commodities. (...) It is now possible to speak of an international system of influence powerful enough to bind up the educational destinies of the world's peoples. If such as network of global influence limits the discretion of peoples to shape their own educational destinies and imposes its own solution to the moral-material dilemma facing educational policy, then it is worthy of investigation.*

Education is changing, therefore, in relation to new structures and practices brought about during the process of implementing policy and imposed reform at the school-level. The traditional role of educational bureaucracies in the policy process now competes, at national and international levels, with the emerging strengthened role of the education ministry. Yet the practicalities of administration and decision-making at various levels in education have an impact on the social, economic and political factors shaping educational policy. The national and international touchstone addressed in this paper - and intimated by the other presenters in this symposium - is the point where the juxtaposition of phases in the policy intent/documentation/implementation cycle raise problems which drive policy actors towards shared solutions, ones increasingly disposed to increasing the influence of individuals and groups at the micro and meso levels on macro interests.

AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

Policy analysis of national reform in Australia, and in the various states of Australia, provides an appropriate topic for the AERA conference theme, 'Expanding our Community - Learning and Contributing to Practice'. While this paper highlights inadequacies in the educational policy process in Australia and notes the neo-politicisation of educational decision-making, it also provides an argument about the roles teachers, administrators and educational researchers (and combinations of these) play in helping our communities make sense of and contribute to schooling. The arguments are largely polemical, given the restraints of the symposium, but detailed empirical data to support these views is being established in a cumulative sequence of research projects [1] which also depict emerging links between policy-related research and practice, ones with the potential to act as a bridge - I use the term touchstone (common ground) - between the various policy actors and the state [2]. In this regard, while Ball and Bowe indicate a new approach to the analysis of policy (policy sociology in particular), my contribution is an attempt to develop a new approach to the *application* of policy analysis.

In the 1980s, governments in all Australian states, regardless of the political party in power, have developed policy and legislation intended to re-assert centralised control over key aspects (curriculum, teacher training and teachers' work) in all levels of schooling. Australia was influenced more by New Zealand [NZ] than Britain, Europe or the United States of America, though perhaps learning from the mistakes of the NZ Picot Report rather than emulating it. For example, New South Wales [NSW] ended zoning for school enrolments but rejected the voucher concept for distributing student numbers. NSW also instituted Key Learning Areas (a core curriculum), restricting but not excluding the place of school/community-based courses. Nationally, there are constitutional problems for any government attempting to control what the states do in their education systems. Further, there are large non-government systems in many states.

Incidentally, Australians tend to be cynical about politicians, bureaucrats, "experts" and their reforms. While this does not make Australian teachers more political than their international peers (witness the strikes in New York and Britain), it is one ingredient that makes the policy soup in Australia a little less bitter than elsewhere. And Australian schools were changing anyway; students, parents and employers were becoming consumers through their involvement in school-based curriculum development; teachers were under stress, over-worked by local initiatives yet their careers stalled by the sheer weight of baby-boomer numbers. There was a mood of unease and a sense of expectation in the early 1980s which arose from the problem of determining how schools do and should initiate, respond to and manage reform policies from the state and national levels. Schools were confronting the issue of local autonomy co-existing with state and national directives: should they just cope, should they recreate, accommodate, resist and/or capture policy?

The problem was exacerbated in the late 1980s when the rhetoric of Australian policy documents shifted from familiar educational discourse to an ideology and discourse of administration that valued the market forces of (what was claimed to be) competition, choice and excellence, which sought smaller government on a platform of conservative ("rational") economics yet, paradoxically, aimed to shut out the actors and users of those management and curriculum policies at all but the lowest levels of decision-making. Paradoxically, because this model contradicted the 'hands off' market rationale, but also because those working at the front line of education were being simultaneously asked to renew schools and raise standards by those who generated other policies attacking teacher quality. This paper hopes to portray how workers in education appear to expect to be involved in the policy process but also want the right to ask whether the intent and expectations revealed in the discourse of these government policies (and union counter-claims) are as appropriate as they purport to be.

THE AUSTRALIAN POLICY LANDSCAPE

Policy-making and school leadership occurs in an environment of turbulence, complexity and resistance. While there have never been so many reports in the sphere of education, on so many topics, addressed by so many different vested interests, across so many state, national and international borders, there is little formal agreement about what contemporary policies should be. This fairly chaotic scenario may cause some people concern. Is it that policy-makers are incompetent or is it that policy-making is now so inter-related with socio-economic, macro-economic and political forces that a clear cut position is never realistically possible? While many of these reports, legislated

reforms and re-structurings of educational administration were conceived as a 'master plan', as the 'one best way' and even as a 'quick fix', they grew into *enfants terribles*, generating political upheaval, public disquiet and professional disabuse. This can be interpreted as a sign of the strength and fecundity of the debate, of the health of policy studies in the 1990s. Policy models and management theories, just like other forms of knowledge, are problematic and contestable. However, the knowledge-power nexus of the 1980s belonged almost exclusively to the New Right.

The ideas of the New Right are fairly well known today but in the 1980s they appeared as a fresh alternative to political parties across the political spectrum, particularly those striving to govern within tight budgets. Essentially, the New Right argued for economic rationalism, or economic reductionism as Walker (1991: 4) suggests, a programme of turning state control over to individuals whether in business, education, health, law or rural industry. In doing so, it was argued, the market forces of competition create higher quality products and a greater diversity of products at less cost to the state. Efficiency, effectiveness, tight coordination, policy control and national goals become the key dynamics driving government while simultaneously attempting to reduce government intervention in the economic arena (Ruggles and O'Higgins, 1987: 161-3). Through these changes, corporate-style responsibility and managerialism dominated the administration of public services. As we will see, fiscal coercion went hand-in-hand with this organisational restructuring.

The problem for educational policy has been the nature of this level of economic thinking, rather than the concept of education playing an economic role. We now all know that the various attempts at economic rationalism by governments in Australia, North America and Europe have been spectacularly unsuccessful in improving the economic welfare of our nation states. At the beginning of 1992, Australia is in the middle of the worst recession since the Great Depression of the early 1930s and with the highest unemployment since the Second World War. Just as the times were changing at the beginning of the 1960s, they change again. We are realising that there was a high 'opportunity cost' (Goodman & Dolan, 1985: 12-14) in the swing to economic rationalism during the 1980s. That is, decisions to follow a dry economic course cost other opportunities, excluded a diversity of policy directions and re-defined, in very limiting ways for schools, such terms as 'equity', 'excellence', 'reform' and 'choice'. Those paths not taken may have opened up solutions which, given the antagonistic climate, were never considered at the macro levels of decision-making.

The evidence is coming in that hard-nosed, dry-eyed, economic rationalism is not the medicine that would cure our economic ills and, therefore, should not be the sole determinant of government policy. What this suggests is that the tide is turning. Politicians in Australia have became wary of policy advice deriving from the narrow ideological base of neo-classical economics which dominates national bureaucracies (Pusey, 1991). Early in 1992 the powerful Public Accounts committee of the national Parliament examined broadening the sources of policy advice, of professionally produced knowledge, to include those outside the narrow band offered by the bureaucracy (Hartcher, 1992a, 1992b). The February 1992 economic statement by our new Prime Minister was constructed away from the bureaucrats in a deliberate attempt to develop less artificial and arid solutions to Australia's economic ills. Burton (1992) cites this as signalling the end of the bureaucratic capture of the Labor government. Cass (1992) notes that Australia is witnessing the slow but steady development of a critique of economic rationalism with a re-assertion of social rationalism and social justice as the focus of the political debate in the 1990s.

Policy Revisited

This brings us to the framework for policy decision-making. The traditional concept is to view policy as a fairly linear procedure, one that occurs within a specific time-span, and one that is directed from the top down. Most decision-making is understood to occur down through these layers with little allowance, or expectation, that there be an upward movement of advice, decision-making or solutions. Yet education is a multi-functional activity and, as Walker (1990) argues, school-level decision-making should not be separated from the wider context of educational policy and administration. The research reported on in this paper suggests that this framework should be viewed more as a spiral, with a dual flow of information up and down through the layers, with appropriate decisions being taken at the appropriate levels.

It is here that Ball and Bowe's (1991) view of policy as cyclical is so fitting. Ball and Bowe have demonstrated how policy arising from legislative reform in Britain is constantly evolving: new problems arise, new conditions are set, new contradictions emerge as old ones are resolved. As Power (1982) states, "Education policy must be fluid, flexible, and precocious enough to keep abreast of (these changes)". When we look at particular policies, we notice that there are a number of different, partially overlapping, *cyclical* phases. In their analysis of education politics and policy making, Ball and Bowe (1991) cite these as: *Intended policy* (what the various interest groups want); *Actual policy* (the document, legislation and/or report); and, *Policy-in-use* (systemic, regional and school-level reaction) [3]. This policy perspective builds on what Katz & Kahn (1966; cited in Telfer, 1987:4) warned us a quarter of a century ago:

The mere announcement of an official that the policy of an organisation will be thus and so is not in itself proof of policy-making. It could be mere recognition of current practices as official policy. (...) The main point is that we can easily be misled by teleological fictions provided by organisation spokesmen.

The cyclical policy "model" allows us to see policy as starting with practice, as Katz and Kahn infer, or at any other point around the circumference, or at a number of points at the same time! This analysis understands that policies are not frozen texts, that policy is anything but predetermined, logical, static and unproblematic: policy is process, policy is multi-faceted, policy is long-term and cumulative, policy is contestable, policy is language, policy is people.

Thus, there is a large grey area across covert, actual and public policy (what people are talking about and doing). Through all levels there is a lot unwritten. We could make a comparison between the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum, a concept with which most people are familiar, and policy documents and the *hidden policy*. In the 1980s, market forces were intended to unleash an unprecedented period of change, changes which were unlikely to eventuate through the known processes of policy reform. All Australian states, to some degree, moved towards decentralised educational administration, teacher promotion on merit, skills testing for students, a national curriculum, specialisation and a focus on technology education including the post-secondary level. Schools have become business-minded, goal-oriented and subject to a fluctuating market (of students) "guided" by national curricula, prescriptive legislation, budget restraints and a heightened politicisation of policy. Emerging out of this landscape we can identify the welfare of the community being replaced by the notion of general public benefit (as advice from public interest groups is replaced by that from consultants and "experts"), new dilemmas arising in the struggle for social justice (as articulate and wealthy communities gain advantages over those lacking the same cultural and economic capital compounded by the market distributing resources unevenly).

There are many tensions involved in these substantive changes to policy directions. In order to achieve strong policy commitment for social justice today it is radical to argue, on the basis of the emerging landscape painted above, *for* centralisation. For example, Lazar (1992: 4) is convinced that while school-based management may look like a return to the legendary one-school room it is not a triumph of Jeffersonian democracy nor a blow to twentieth century bureaucracy. This paper hopes to provide some guidance out of this conundrum, indicating that the worst aspects of recent Australian policies have tended to be mediated through the phases of policy making and taking. In some cases, policy has been defeated outright. Perhaps, therefore, it is not necessary, desirable, nor feasible to go back to centralisation and repeat the mistakes of the past and, for example, re-exclude parents. In reality, local conditions have always defined the resourcing and standards for particular situations. It was the failure of reformism to reduce inequalities (Hindess, 1987), reformism exercised through monolithic bureaucratic centralised systems which controlled massive additional funding, that lead state and national politicians in Australia to look to new policies for administering and funding educational institutions.

NATIONAL POLICY AS INTERVENTION

There are a number areas of national intervention in Australian education which merit attention in this brief overview though I will concentrate on curriculum policy development, on the nature of educational work, and the imposed re-structuring of post-compulsory education. In Australian education there is a national level, there are state and/or regional levels, there is the local level and, within that level, there are subject faculty and classroom parameters. While this coheres with the

systems under review in the other papers presented in this symposium, Australia has a different constitutional structure to Britain, New Zealand and many European countries which limits national policy control over state education.

While there has been increasing national intervention since 1945 in Australia (Foster, 1981: 355), state governments retain a high degree of control over their own (quite different) public educational systems. There are advantages to this arrangement (a consequence of state jealousies during the formation of a federation for Australia during the 1890s), but there are also some ridiculous disparities between starting age, reading/writing schemes, certification and teacher training that impede teacher and student mobility between systems and states. However, the national government does have some constitutional power over education and is able to play a dominant role through funding special programmes, setting policy debate and, more recently, bringing the states together to identify core curricula and common teaching standards, actions equivalent to removing a constitutional straight-jacket (Anderson, 1982).

Typically, new government policies are reactive to expressions of public dissatisfaction and/or pressure from vested interests which force the government to review legislation, appoint a committee of inquiry, or instruct the bureaucracy to draw up new plans. One can identify public disquiet which preceded reforms to secondary education at the state level (Crump, 1991). Yet there were few signs that tertiary education, primarily a national concern, was at some significant crossroad in the late 1980s (Harrold, 1991). Rather, the changes to Higher Education in Australia were driven by a politician - John Dawkins - bent on radical reform who set the institutions off-balance and pushed through structural changes on the basis of availability of funding [4]. This is close to what Peters and Waterman (1982: 126) identified, and recommended, as *chunking*: breaking things up to facilitate organisational fluidity and to encourage action. One must acknowledge that similar strategies were employed by state Ministers of Education but, as indicated above, they could claim some mitigating circumstances. It is not as easy to identify precursors on the national level, least of all on educational grounds. Rather, economic models seem to have provided their own justification.

For the purposes of this paper, those national changes in Higher Education orchestrated by the Minister concerned (Dawkins) are of less immediate concern. The reconstruction of post-compulsory education, intended to alter management, funding, research profiles and the nature of academic work, and to reshape the composition of tertiary student cohorts, has already developed under the aegis of a Unified National System [UNS] (Meek and Goedegebuure, 1989; Harrold, 1991). We have a new National Board for Employment, Education and Training, structured on a tripartite basis [government, business and unions] overseeing the work of four Councils [Schools, Skills, Formation, Higher Education and Research], a white paper *Higher Education: A Policy Statement*, was released in May 1988, and tertiary fees were re-introduced by the Wran committee under the guise of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme [HECS].

More recently (October, 1991), the new Minister for Higher Education, Peter Baldwin, announced the *Quality and Diversity in the 1990s* paper which aims to refocus on the *quality* of tertiary education following the structural changes noted above. In both cases, however, the rationale for this restructuring, according to (Macpherson, 1991), is based on economic efficiency, educational and political effectiveness, and the corporatisation and politicisation of administrative services. This time, financial incentives act as a carrot rather than a stick, "guiding" universities through evolution rather than imposing a revolution (as in the Dawkins' years). Interestingly, McNicol (1991) sees the core of these actions as more about alternate philosophies for education rather than the affordability or control of higher education systems.

While the binary system of colleges of advanced education/universities has all but been eliminated through amalgamation, which subsequently impacted on the nature and style of academic teaching, and while universities are becoming more public about their role in relation to industry and economic growth, the greatest change will come closer to the end of the twentieth century when - if the Finn Report is implemented - vocational skills-based tertiary education will outstrip the provision for academic learning. If the intentions of the Finn Report and Mayer Committee are realised, the shape of higher education in Australia in the year 2000 will have been dramatically altered, not only within academe bit across the tertiary landscape. However, at this stage, this scenario is hypothetical and

there is time to influence the policy development process in a way which may transform the intended implementation. I have already identified instances of this phenomenon at the state level in New South Wales (Crump, 1991, 1992) and point below to similar successes on the national front with respect to the attempt to establish a national curriculum and reforms to teacher education.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT FOR A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

On the 23rd May 1988, as part of a broad economic statement by the national Labour government, the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training (Dawkins), announced a programme to develop a national effort for Australian schools. This is a good example of the impact of corporate federalism on policy-making for Australian schools (Lingard, 1991). As noted, national corporatism is a theory about how the nation-state can best achieve its economic objectives (Walker, 1991). Mr Dawkins argued, in *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, that it is essential that everybody involved in education develop a national perspective and shared commitment to agreed national goals. He stated (1988: 7-8):

To fulfil these basic purposes and meet community expectations (schools) ought to provide a coherent curriculum appropriate to contemporary social and economic needs. (...) We need a curriculum that is relevant to our time and place in the world. (...) What is required is the development of a common framework that sets out major areas of knowledge and the most appropriate mix of skills and experience for students in all the years of schooling, but accommodates the different or specific needs of different parts of Australia. (...) Such a common curriculum framework could, for example, emphasise the need for higher general levels of literacy, numeracy and analytical skills across the nation. (...) Priority should be given to developing the framework for mathematics and science courses which are relevant to technologically-oriented society and which increase participation in mathematics and science for both boys and girls.

The call for a common national curriculum had been made before. Malcolm Skilbeck, as Director of the Curriculum Development Centre [CDC] in the late 1970s, encouraged the formation of a programme to review school practice, theory and research on core curriculum. Interestingly, the outcome, *Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* (1980), was disseminated during the rise of school-based curriculum development and increasing autonomy in decision-making at the school level, though, as Boomer (1991:13) reminds us, there has been a *de facto* common national curriculum framework across Australia for the last thirty years. In other words, there has been collaboration notwithstanding state differences, there was a touchstone on which Dawkins was able to build.

The factors encouraging the CDC towards the development of a more formally constructed national core curriculum were surprisingly similar to those outlined by Dawkins eight years later: social change, community concerns, innovations, limited resources, outdated subject organisation and future needs (CDC, 1980: 6-7). The core was defined as that part of the whole or total curriculum which all students are required to study. While this definition sounds rather loose, the document set out nine specific areas of knowledge and experience central to achieving common aims for education and schooling in Australia (1980: p.20) while allowing for additional core learnings to be selected and organised by schools. Further, the CDC envisaged 'core' as more than subject content so that learning experiences, resources, manual skills, values education and reasoning processes gained importance in the construction of a core curriculum.

It is this broader understanding of 'education' which was undermined through the impact of economic reductionism on the educational reforms of the late 1980s. Whereas the CDC conception of a core/common curriculum appears committed to a broad education, the corporatist conception leans towards technical/occupational education which is consumer-oriented. While these polarities are not incommensurable - there is nothing in a broad education which excludes vocational/technical skills and no reason why occupational training can not include reasoning skills - in the concurrent moves towards national appraisal of educational and teaching standards the social, moral and political indices are dominated by the economic.

In a meeting of the Australian Education Council [AEC] at Hobart [Tasmania] during April 1989, the territory, state and national ministers of education made what is known as the Hobart Declaration: the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia. As already suggested, this declaration was not spontaneous but preceded by earlier attempts and a painful bringing together of

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different systems and ideologies. That it occurred at all was due to the prevailing economic malaise in Australia so it was not surprising that the main thread through the details was the education-economy nexus. In 1991 the AEC identified eight learning areas for national collaborative action: English, Mathematics, Sciences, Languages other the English, Arts, Technology, Studies of Society and Environment, and Health (physical education and personal development. These areas of knowledge were intended to be defined through two phases: firstly, a mapping exercise to collect and analyse current curriculum documents; second, the formulation of a statement of common curriculum principles as well as profiles of achievement, that is, performances indicators. So far, mapping has been conducted for the general curriculum, Mathematics, Science, Technology, English, Studies of Society and Environmental Education (DEET, 1992:3). However, the maps as published by the CDC are for limited distribution only.

The Nation and the States

We need to pause, however, and reflect on what is meant by 'national curriculum'. Within an Australian perspective it is both a geographical and ideological phrase. As intimated earlier, a national curriculum in Australia is closer to a set of shared state perspectives across the nation than the mandatory legislated form it has taken in Britain. Dawkins (1991) described it as "a more nationally consistent system of schooling" based on negotiated agreement over shared and pressing problems so that Australia can build towards what might be. The purpose of the mapping statement for Australian schools (1990: i) states that it:

is to provide a framework around which systems and schools may build their mathematics curriculum. It does not provide a syllabus or curriculum and indeed, its structure makes it inappropriate for direct use in that way. Rather, it should provide a foundation for appropriate courses which will meet students' needs and reflect advances in our knowledge (...). The Statement encourages innovation and experimentation so that all learners have a positive experience of Mathematics.

To this extent Australia's national curriculum is, as Kennedy (1991) argues, a representation of symbolic political actions rather than practical ones. It is a form of touchstone, though an incomplete touchstone as not all are asked to share in decision-making about the common ground. The mapping exercise intends to achieve more than symbolism. The curriculum mapping process entails seeking coherence (through steering committees, networking, reference to professional interest groups) and providing publicity on activities through a regular newsletter. As Eltis (1991) notes, the states would not have agreed to participate in the mapping exercise if it had not been constructed as a shared procedure the results of which the states can use as they judge fitting. The problem perhaps is not such much the mapping exercise itself but the marginalisation of educational practitioners in its construction. Broad consultation was meant to be a part of this procedure though this has occurred mainly within and between government groups. If Australian governments have reached a new settlement (Freeland, 1991) on schooling, then there needs to be a broad public critique. If not, Groundwater-Smith (1991) argues that teachers have the power to make any settlement unworkable and, I add, force their way on to the forbidden territory.

Part of the new settlement on schooling was the transmutation of the Curriculum Development Centre in 1990, this time into the Curriculum Development Corporation. The new CDC is a jointly owned company ('owned' by the territory, state and national governments except NSW) with a Board consisting of ministers of education, representatives from government and private schools, parents and teachers. The role of the new CDC is to develop and encourage the implementation of national curriculum principles, however, no state system will be bound by its decisions. Parochialism and state idiosyncrasies tend to mediate against a national curriculum forming in the same overbearing way as we have seen in Britain and New Zealand. Yet it is not unreasonable to propose that those guiding the national curriculum do expect something to come of all this effort and expense as the CDC does not set policy, it does as it is told. As Macpherson (1990: 215) sees it, we now have a new oligarchy located alongside traditional representative political structures, an oligarchy able to able to exercise epistemic and process privileges over-riding that allowed for in public institutions [5].

Therefore, the issue is whether the national curriculum - and its apparatus - is an improvement in the way we educate Australian children or simply a more subtle means of control (Hardy, 1990). Or, as

Simon (1988: 3) asks, will it allow us to move from "visionary rhetoric to classroom reality, from curriculum critique to pedagogical possibility"? While the aim is to improve education on a national basis, what this move assumes is a more centralised system of control over areas once left to state, regional and even local levels. While there are management advantages in terms of efficiency and cost-benefits in centralisation, and possibly benefits through removing the more obvious disparities between the state systems noted above, there are advantages in diversity. Boomer (1991: 13) contends that as all systems move to consolidate and centralise curriculum, "the danger is that Australia might lose the liveliness and innovativeness that comes from schools developing courses fitted to their local needs".

On the basis of data emerging from the research programme I coordinate (see Footnote 1), I would support Walker's (1987: 25) suggestion that one way to reconcile national, state, regional and local interests is to shape an interactive exchange between the various levels of input and development over different levels of problems. In this way it is the resolution of shared sets of educationally relevant problems which determine, for this example, a common curriculum. This approach does not limit participants to action within their own level but, perhaps ideally, encourages a two-way spiral of information and decisions informed by experience and practice relevant to each level. It is a matter of scale as well as location. I call this approach *Pragmatic Policy Development* [6].

Why we need an interactive approach, rather than a centralised and top-down plan, can be seen by looking historically at how - in current approaches - the different levels and actors are never synchronised but move forward in waves which hit the beach at different times [7]. This is a complex phenomenon and needs greater elaboration than is possible in this paper. However, it can be represented by following a time-line on curriculum reform in Australia and looking for the intersection of actors in curriculum policy and practice [Figure 1]. It is clear from this generalised account that the curriculum practices in schools lag well behind governmental policy decisions and even further behind contemporary educational debate. More alarmingly, the content of teacher training texts and associated courses run even further behind.

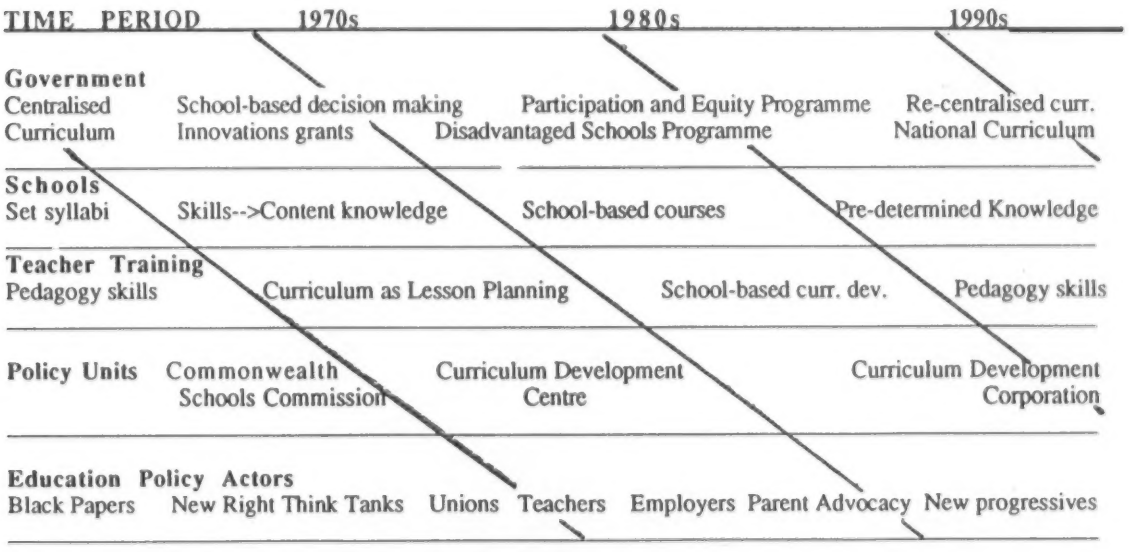


FIGURE 1

THE DYSFUNCTION OF CURRICULUM POLICY AND PRACTICE
(Crump, 1993)

Some of the problem outlined in the Figure 1 can be explained in terms of the time-consuming processes of distributing information about policies, publishing texts and re-writing and designing courses and school curricula. Changes to teacher education are even more tedious. A more sophisticated explanation is the role teachers play in translating new curriculum ideas into their local situation, incorporating into the intended policy their own values and interests (Smith, 1985). The process noted above dramatically indicates that if curriculum policy decision-making is left to centralised powers then it will never be implemented faithfully, nor efficiently, nor effectively. For the 1990s, I perceive that the debate in curriculum policy is already swinging away from both these sources (bureaucratic machinations and intellectual fashions) towards to a more balanced view of broadly based democratic community agency playing a significant role. A national curriculum for Australian schools will then be a worthwhile objective.

NATIONAL POLICY AND TEACHERS' WORK

Of further concern is the changing nature of teachers' work, and in this I am referring to the whole-of-life educational process: teachers at all levels within all systems across all states in Australia. This is a big claim to make and the evidence is only tentative. However, national pressure has been applied to find the "best" practices to achieve maximum output by teachers since the Schools Council's *Teacher Quality: an issues paper* Report (November, 1989), the *Teacher Education in Australia* Green Paper (1990) known as the Ebbeck Report, *Australia's Teachers: An Agenda For the Next Decade* (1990), the *National Professional Body For Teachers* (1991) Discussion Paper and in 1991 *A National Statement on the Teaching of English* developed by the Australian Education Council of Education Ministers and the formation in February 1991 of the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning [NPQTL]. These publications illustrate levels of national collaboration unprecedented in the history of Australian education. Given this scenario, it seems almost an understatement when Deer (1991) suggested that it is well within the powers of the national government to implement, for example, a national teacher education curriculum.

As I will demonstrate shortly, the Ebbeck Report was contested and shelved, though perhaps it has reappeared in aspects of the Finn Report. The NPQTL is faring better: intended to run for three years, it is jointly funded at three million dollars and has a three person secretariat based in Canberra (Durbridge, 1991). Given Australia's constitutional arrangements, it will be up to individual systems (employers and employees) to give shape to the Project's outcomes, if they so chose. Nor is this Project necessarily intended to supplant the normal process of industrial/enterprise bargaining, with work practices under review through a number of other state and national agencies. Yet much of the agenda of the NPQTL is linked to staffing, resourcing and workloads as part of broad national economic imperatives.

New notions of educational management and educational work are the two main inputs shaping the revision of policy on teachers and teaching. I see these inputs as representative of a construct of hierarchy and power. Whereas teachers have often been aligned with the state in acting against the interests of pupils, I view teaching as a labour process not unlike pupils' learning, with both groups identifiable as employees in the process of knowledge production. Certainly, the Ebbeck Report located teachers in a passive role (instructors in the classroom rather than as decision-makers). Award re-structuring similarly imposes a rhetoric which presumes that it is teachers' individual actions which lower standards, quality, efficiency and effectiveness (Gitlin, 1987). Award re-structuring seeks to reverse this trend through regulating the conditions of work and changing it towards an even more differentiated and alienated activity. For example, the devolution of administration of school budgets and the like has not been designed to include political devolution. The focus of the reports listed above is on the act of production, not control. While the NPQTL is building a research project of 500 schools to examine how changes in teachers' work organisation can enhance student learning outcomes, they are not bothering to explore the change to teachers' work itself.

The NPQTL approach takes us on a journey back through 100 years. *The Elementary Code of 1904* (Maclure 1986: 155) in Britain stated that teachers must lead by example:

aided by the sense of discipline, which should pervade the school, to implant in the children habits of industry, self-control and perseverance in the face of difficulties; they can teach them to reverence what is noble, to be ready for self-sacrifice, and to strive their utmost after purity and truth.

One of my past relations, Andrew S. Nelson, wrote in his application for promotion in the NSW Department of Public Instruction (dated 22nd August, 1891):

I entered the Service in 1866 and was appointed in December 1867 to South Grafton Public School (...). During the whole of that time I have never been sick, and never asked for, nor had a day's leave of absence. School duties first, my own affairs afterwards. I have always devoted the whole of my energies to the school, and for the advances of children. I lost the sight of my right eye some time ago and do not like to strain the sight of the remaining one by reading too much by lamp light, but if at any time the Department should insist upon my taking the step for examination I will prepare myself at all hazards.

The difference between 1891 and 1992 is, of course, the growth of trade unions and the development of the welfare state. Lawn and Ozga (1981) re-assessed teachers as educational workers for us a decade ago, illustrating the increasing proletarianisation of teachers as their role becomes linked even closer to boosting economic production. Yet current reforms attempt to blindly ignore the politics of teachers' work (White, 1983, Lawn & Grace, 1987) and the ideological framework in which it occurs (Harris, 1982; Apple, 1979, 1986). As Seddon (1988, 1990) reminds us, when people are active in the teaching labour process, they create and recreate the conditions of their work and, perhaps, themselves. She notes how, during the 1930s Depression in Australia, during a period of social dislocation and restructuring not unlike the 1990s,

It was a period of widespread political activism often among people previously politically unengaged beyond the minimal demands of civic duty (...) class politics were fought inside and outside parliament and were evident in the educational arena as much as any other. (Seddon, 1988: 15).

That is, while external pressure on teachers' work comprises their independence through attempts to redefine 'the teacher', seeks policy consensus, encourages compliance through award restructuring and constrains teacher action through increasing centricity, the school system regimes *also* contain the possibility of contestation and opposition.

This wonderful part of the process can not be cut out merely by the imposition of bureaucratic or political will. Indeed, the latter tend to spur on resistance. As policy reforms move Australia towards national registration of teachers, national standards, national control over teachers' careers, national competency-based evaluation and nationally-driven award re-structuring, there are those who pause and question the ways in which new meanings about teachers' work may change the way we teach as well as what we teach. It is a mistake to accept that teachers are not doing this. As foreshadowed above, political contestation over the formulation and proposed implementation of the Ebbeck Report, led to a large extent by concerted opposition from union and professional bodies in Queensland, resulted in the demise of its recommendations. As O'Brien (1991: 21) sees it,

both the formulation and and implementation of policy is a political process and must be seen to involve the exercise of power; it is best understood, therefore, in terms of contestation and struggle.

The Ebbeck Report, with its attempt to subvert all other interests in teaching to national economic goals, was shelved as a consequence of well-articulated opposition from educators from many fields and most states in Australia, educators O'Brien paints as more progressive and educationally informed than those who constructed the Report. Yet this was a move won, not the game. Education remains a political football, kicked (or thrown) across the policy playing fields in a too cavalier manner. As Ball (1990) asserts, 'policy matters', and that is what this conference is about: making better sense of and making better contributions to theory and practice. Two years ago Zeichner (1990: 22) told this organisation in Boston that "educational reforms can be contributory to the creation of a democratic just society, but they cannot be sufficient". The appropriate role for critical intellectuals today is to keep open a public space for the voices of all groups to be heard and to defend open, democratic politics (Giroux, 1991).

We have a phrase in Australia for those who fought for social justice earlier this century - 'true believers'. In being deliberately optimistic I agree with Young (1993) that the course outlined by Zeichner, Giroux and others may require an act of faith. But Young extends this to include a concept of action, one that pushes forward notions of discourse and structure, one that captures the prevailing rhetoric and makes it our own, one that recognises the possibility of our own authorship and one that takes responsibility for it again. Foucault (1988) showed us how knowledge and power are joined together in discourse, which is in itself neither liberating nor dominating; it is specific practices and the local situation which will decide the outcome. Kanpol (1989) notes how group resistance exhibits more promise for emancipatory change than individual resistances.

Teachers, educational researchers, parents, pupils and administrators do *not* consent to the official discourse of state policy as readily as Codd (1988: 237) postulates. The relationship between language and action means that discourse is constantly being tested in practice, nowhere moreso than in education. When the link between theory and action fails, there is a 'space of freedom' into which we can jump and tip the balance in our favour. Thus arises a new relationship between the state, its institutions and us. My analysis of the *policy burlesque* of the 1980s in Australia is that it is drawing to a close. The 1990s should provide opportunities to do as the conference theme suggests, expand our community so that we can share new ground in learning and contributing to educational practice.

PRAGMATIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT

One of the major problems facing individuals in deciding where they fit in to the state-institution policy nexus is identifying the limits and possibilities of their action. While reforms constructing educational renewal claim they are intended to reduce the functions of central bureaucracies, even if this was achieved it would not be enough to *improve* schools. If we are living in a post-modern world, where things are fragmented and pluralist, then we need to approach our educational problems through an analysis which encourages a diversification of control, not merely a devolution of the same spheres and means of control, adding real meaning to 'choice' and 'excellence'. As Burbules and Densmore (1991: 155) suggest,

> *one can conceive of choice in a radically different way: as being based on involvement, participation, and direct responsiveness. In this sense, choice is not a process of selecting ready-made products off the shelf but of being involved in the conception, planning and design of what those very options look like.*

Identifying problems and seeking solutions can be represented as a worthwhile scientific endeavour, one not too far away from being pragmatic about policy, teaching and educational leadership. In using the term 'pragmatic' I am referring to the philosophy of pragmatism rather than to its generally understood attribute of opportunistic and hard-nosed action. Pragmatism is currently enjoying a revival in interest in the 1990s to such an extent that perhaps we can talk about neo-Pragmatism. There is a particular resurgence of interest in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, a figurehead familiar to many of us for progressive educational thought who was attacked, more by implication, in the shift to the Right in educational policy in the 1980s. Of Pragmatism itself, Scheffler (1986: ix-x) writes:

> *In its efforts to clarify and extend the methods of science, and to strengthen the prospects of freedom and intelligence in the contemporary world, it represents also a philosophical orientation of urgent general interest. (...) It addresses itself not only to the problems of philosophers but also to problems of men (...) emphasising always the primary significance of critical thought, logical method, and the test of experience in all realms of endeavour. (...) I applaud the conception of philosophy exemplified by the pragmatist's work. That philosophy ought to connect detail with principle, analysis with vision - that it should employ the resources of its tradition and its uncompromising logical criticism in illuminating the main realms of life and the problems of current thought and action... .*

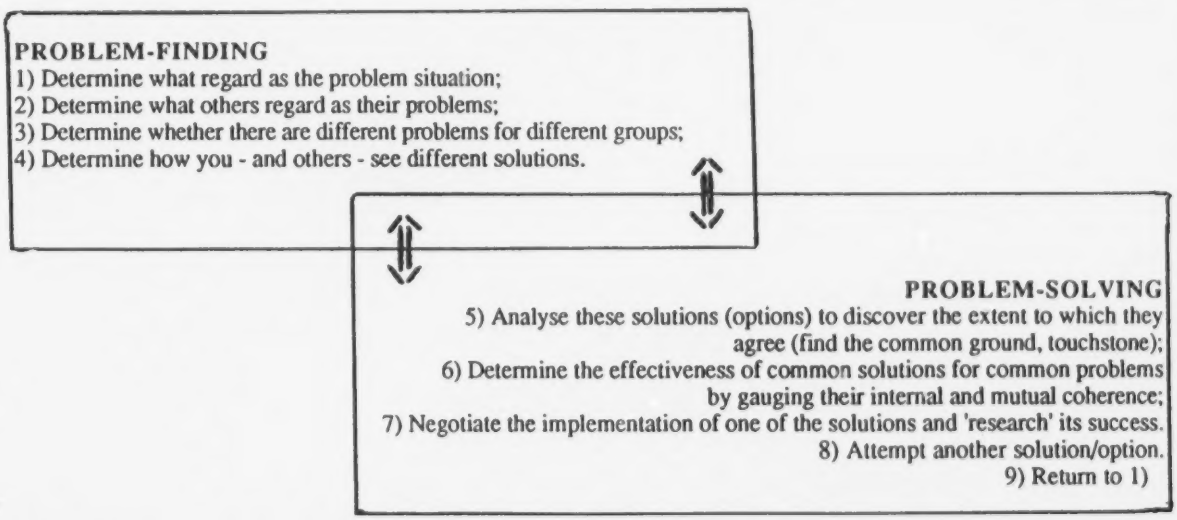
Pragmatism began as, and remains, a *mediating* philosophy. Dewey viewed education as a continual growth, therefore, the function of schooling is to "enable individuals to develop in power and awareness" through linking "available knowledge with the live context beyond the classroom", that is, to allow individuals to develop critical methods of thought (Scheffler, 1986: 240-4). For Dewey, the primary goal of the school is its long-range transformation of society through seeking solutions to the problems of the larger culture, a society illuminated by critical intelligence.

Pragmatism offers educational workers a very powerful tool for dealing with policy related to curriculum, professional development, and organisational management. Pragmatism attempts to construe these under the conditions of increased powers of social control, so that control may be vested in those whom the policy affects. Thus, a model for pragmatic policy development entails problem-finding and problem-solving. This means identifying the presence of dissatisfaction (this does not necessarily mean a negative starting point); setting the problem so that a solution is possible (though this does not mean it will be successfully resolved); developing an hypothesis (to a large extent policy-making is hypothesis testing); and verifying the choice through testing it. Walker (1984: 6) explains:

First, we need to formulate competing viewpoints/theories as clearly as possible, specifying their points of agreement and disagreement, of harmony and conflict; and second we need to work out what can count as touchstone, the grounds on which dialogue can occur, disputes can be settled or at least the relative merits of competing viewpoints assessed.

Thus the Pragmatist perspective emphasises the coherent and mutually beneficial problem-solving and learning capabilities of individuals, groups and of the school organisation itself. It is a proposition I make on the basis of a sequence of research projects involving multiples case studies of schools and comparisons with similar projects nationally and internationally [Britain and Sweden]. It grew out of the experience of (and research into) school-based decision-making and school-based curriculum development in the 1970s and early 1980s. The Pragmatist perspective, therefore, is grounded in data, it is a reflection of practice which is in part an outcome of the failure of the dominant policy implementation and management models.

In Figure 2, I present a template for applying the pragmatist perspective to policy, curriculum and organisation development. I make no claims for generalisability, not only because I regard that as now acknowledged to be a flawed concept but also because generalisability is not a relevant consideration. I am not proposing a theory or model replicable in every way, but more a procedure to be tested in practice. I am claiming the template offers a design entailing an infinite number of outcomes appropriate to each educational level and to those within each level. Further, the procedure has the potential to promote interaction between levels, once there is a realisation of shared problems.


PROBLEM-FINDING
1) Determine what regard as the problem situation;
2) Determine what others regard as their problems;
3) Determine whether there are different problems for different groups;
4) Determine how you - and others - see different solutions.
PROBLEM-SOLVING
5) Analyse these solutions (options) to discover the extent to which they agree (find the common ground, touchstone);
6) Determine the effectiveness of common solutions for common problems by gauging their internal and mutual coherence;
7) Negotiate the implementation of one of the solutions and 'research' its success.
8) Attempt another solution/option.
9) Return to 1)

Based on Walker & Moran (1983: 22) The Coherence Model

Figure 2

Template for Pragmatic Organisation / Policy / Curriculum Development (Crump, 1993)

To follow the Pragmatist procedure, one needs to confront competing perspectives about the organisation, policy or curriculum and identify problems by specifying points of agreement and conflict. Also, one needs to decide which of these points share common ground, that is, which provide a platform on which the merits of the competing views can be assessed and solutions attempted. This procedure can be viewed as searching out common interest strategies, strategies which will satisfy common interests held by the various participants, opposing interests and entrenched power blocks in the policy process. This is a good way to cope with the structuring school-based policies within those mandated by the state.

This procedure is necessary because school cultures are generally marked by orderly inaction. Its members do not always react to problems, nor select information rationally. Reaction happens during the impact of problems (for example, new policies) when they hit the organisation. To some extent things get sorted out into a pattern, but often it takes hard work to make sense of the pattern. It takes contact between those within the organisation to drive that impact forward towards some degree of resolution. To take up some of the economic rhetoric, the process can be compared to that occurring in a traditional market place where there is a dynamic of supply and demand, a bartering of ideas, wholesale trade-offs and the delivery of margins which generate, in this case, a profit via organisational coherence. Not everyone will like the solutions but then no "solution" is final. The procedure can become a controlling mechanism in that not all interests and solutions fall into the touchstone in every instance. But it is an arena in which there is freedom to, not freedom from (Hayek, 1960), share and participate Table 1).

1)	The point of departure is always one's own conditions.
2)	It is a lived testing of problems and competing solutions.
3)	There is no 'natural' division between political, bureaucratic and professional activity.
4)	It allows for more equal sharing of power.
5)	It sees power as negotiated, in different contexts and over different problems.
6)	It means participants share as many perspectives as is possible.
7)	It engenders a shared, democratic and productive capacity within individuals.
8)	It takes into account micro-political dimensions of decisions.
9)	It involves the ability to translate formal goals into concrete practical action.
10)	It can lead to positive occupational learning.

Table 1 Key Factors in Pragmatic Policy Development (Crump, 1993)

There is no point in some group coming up with a "great solution" if it does not concur with the perspectives of those people affected by the problem, and this has been the classic error in the policy process. What the research programme [on which the pragmatist procedure is based] demonstrates is the ability of actors in the policy process to identify spaces within which they can develop their own freedom. While it may not immediately change the intended policy, it has the potential to change the policy intent through practice. This phenomenon generates what I call *policy competition.*

All players on the educational field need a chance to participate productively and democratically in some phase of the policy process. The dominant models, however enlightened the rhetoric, concentrate on top-down strategies, stage-managed and differentiated policy development and implementation. While "what works" in one school may not suit another, the pragmatist procedure offers an alternative opportunity for dealing with educational policy at and across a variety of levels. As each level builds in strength, it shifts and challenges the justification of policy and shifts the educational focus away from the highest levels. I recognise that teachers operate *within* limited degrees of freedom, limits set by a powerful centralised bureaucracy and, at present, conservative political governments. I am not suggesting that practitioners can overturn, for example, the view of knowledge validated by new curriculum policies in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Britain. But highlighted above is a procedure not afraid of risk-taking and change. In this way it has the potential to re-assert the value of comprehensive universal education within the new dimensions of public education.

NOTES

1) In the writing of this paper I have fused various aspects of my work over the last five years so that I can make the strange familiar to a new audience. As such, it draws on my published and as yet unpublished papers though not wholesale nor ignoring comments made by colleagues and conference participants. It has been a very productive experience. I hope to further develop many of these issues in a forthcoming edited text titled "School-Centred Leadership: putting policy into practice" to be published by Thomas Nelson early in 1993.

The research programme I coordinate builds on my study of Carpenter High School (1985) and includes the Hunter Leading Teacher Project [regional in NSW since 1989], the School Leadership During A Period of Reform Project [1991, state-wide in 1992], the Schools, Business and the Public Sector Project [ARC-funded comparative study in management techniques, 1992/3] and a proposed national project for 1993-95 on policy impact on curriculum and teachers' work.

I wish to thank Christine Toovey, Stephen Ball, Ulf Nytell, Jim Walker, Robert Young, Cecilia Kerkin-White, Carline Wilson, the anonymous participants in the research and students in my courses at the University of Sydney for comments, criticisms and presentations to which I have responded, or not, accepting responsibility for both courses of action. I wish to dedicate this paper to my mother who always asserted that there is no such word as "can't", started her own pre-school to help support our family (being one of few options open to unskilled working class women) and who became a legend in her community, earning the right to remain as Director following government registration of early childhood centres in NSW (the only untrained person to do so).

2) The use of 'touchstone' (Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970) has been adopted to describe the policy ground shared between those involved in policy process. The search for 'touchstone', undertaken in a sequence of research projects (see footnote 1), is based on a view that the growth of knowledge is a problem-solving activity. Problems are those perceived by decision makers and participants at all levels of the education system. Solutions are practices and coping strategies which depict a response to specific problems, though a response need not be successful. While there are differences between the various problem-solution repertoires within and between levels and phases of the policy process, there are many shared contexts and common problem situations.

3) There is emerging evidence that politicians are coming to realise the significance of the cyclical model. In NSW, the Minister for School Education is monitoring policy implementation and is using her powers over the Board of Studies, for example, to pull back actual policy until it gets closer to the original intent.

4) Harrold (1991: 1) notes how, surprisingly, "many organisational and administrative changes of the UNS were authorised by financial legislation introduced through the Budget Session of Commonwealth Parliament", the Higher Education Funding Bill. One also has to consider the role of the bureaucracy. While they have been disempowered to a degree in the neo-politicisation of policy-making, to some extent this is an illusion. Like those closer to the action, bureaucrats are the ones who set in train the implementation phases. This provides an entry that allows them to re-assert their traditional authority. For example, while Leading Teachers in NSW are generally regarded the creation of the then Education Minister, Dr. Terry Metherell, the original group none-the-less were basically hand-picked by the then assistant Director-General, Mr John Lambert, who was seen to give these lucrative appointments as part of the traditional patronage of departmental mandarins.

5) Macpherson sees in this the touchstone for a new theory of the state, something I wish to pursue in a forthcoming publication. incidentally, the first Chairperson of the CDC, Dr Ken Boston, is now Director-General of Education in New South Wales.

6) See Crump (1991) "Pragmatic Policy Development", Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Australian Association For Research In Education, The Gold Coast, Queensland, November 25-30. A revised version has been submitted to the *Journal of Education Policy*.

7) However, the waves all land on the same beach. It was in 1961 that the British Minister for Education (David Eccles) called for an end to the "secret garden" of curriculum. Much of the current debate over the content structure and role of curriculum was the focus of the Wyndham Report (1957) in New South Wales. Teachers in NSW gave up the right to curriculum development for a 4% wage rise under a Labour government before school-based curriculum development was reined in by the conservatives. Much of the discussion so far has been far too negligent in overlooking these antecedents, "reading off" the future without recounting curricular history nor seeking empirical data on what is happening at present.

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Pragmatists invite criticism.

I would appreciate any comments on this paper and would reply to and acknowledge those comments in future presentations.

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